1: Warner E-5 (1926-1929) 1937
OI 17 Murngin OI 17

underlies this most fundamental lateral relationship. Given the correlated basic complex of the junior levirate, by which the next eldest brother inherits a dead man's wife, it would be impossible not to have polygyny; and it is rather difficult to see how the entire system of kinship could exist without the levirate in some form.

A man always tries to obtain his actual mother's brother's daughter; if he cannot get her, he tries to marry someone as near to her in consanguinity as possible.

Usually an older male dué and male galle have an understanding that their sons and daughters shall marry. Such a betrothal could occur before the birth of either child. Sometimes a gawel will promise his wife's next daughter to his waku. Thus, even before birth there is a recognized relationship between dué and galle.

There are several degrees of marriage. As soon as a boy is circumcised and old enough to understand and remember what is told him, his galle is pointed out. At a similar age a galle mielk has her dué diramo shown to her. This is done by the male parents of both children.

The young men and women older than the two usually tease the young couple with somewhat obscene jokes about their relationship and its meaning in their physical behavior. The youngsters are usually shy and ashamed when confronted with such humor; however, as small children, when away from the elders, they play house together. They are fully aware of the sexual act and of sex differences.

About the time facial hair appears upon a boy and the breasts of a girl swell, that is, when sexual intercourse is in their power and of interest to both, they start making love trysts in the bush. They may not copulate at first, but they simulate the act in close contact.

When a girl has her first menses the mother and older women put her inside a house (no special one) and leave her. She is supposed to remain in one place and move with digging sticks as crutches. This represents the myth of the two old women who made the present world, walking with the aid of digging sticks; the older of the two was menstruating. It is believed that menstruation is due to the sexual act, and that the blood is not dangerous to a woman since it comes from the abdomen and not the heart.

When a girl's first menses are over, her father (gawel to her dué) says to her mother (mokul to her dué), "You go make a house for them and fix a camp for them. She is big enough now" (see page 129).

After this, a young couple start living together and are recognized

1: Warner E-5 (1926-1929)1937
OI 17 Murngin OI 17

as husband and wife. They have been copulating before, frequently with the knowledge of the father and mother, but the latter pretend ignorance.

Usually an older man with a wife or two acquires a young woman in her adolescent period. A young girl often starts living in her husband's household before menstruation. The dué usually takes her for fear of having her stolen from her parents by some other dué. He has no intercourse with her during this period. When the girl is old enough he may without ceremony start actual intercourse. Or he may take her out into the bush on the ruse that they are going fishing. He asks her to get some drinking water or some wood. While she is gone he ties a small piece of opossum fur string around his index finger, and when she comes back he asks her to lie down. He places the finger inside her vagina; then they return to camp, and sexual intercourse starts. This minor ceremony is not frequently practiced.

When an older man takes a pre-adolescent girl he helps the mother perform the ceremony at her first menstruation. After this is over the husband paints her with red ochre (this is always done for mourners after the death of a relative to avoid ceremonial uncleanliness, and is used in ceremonies).

Ordinarily there is but little taboo on a menstruating woman. She sleeps in the same house or camp with her husband, though the couple do not copulate. The only restriction in daily life is that no man would allow a wife or any other woman to go out in a canoe with him during this period, for otherwise the great mythical snake, Bapa Indi (the Great Father), would swallow them all. The story is told that not so long ago a man took his two wives in a canoe for a trip from one island to another. One of them was menstruating. When they had gone for a short time Yurlunggur (Bapa Indi) smelt the unclean odor, came out of the subterranean depths, and swallowed them all. This modern folk tale, which is believed by all Murngin, fits into the tribe's most fundamental myth of the two old creator sisters.

The above describes how a man ordinarily obtains a wife and what usually happens; but often a woman is not taken from her parents for some time because her future husband may be away in the country of a more distant clan. Various men may also dispute the right to her, owing to a gawel's exceeding his rights by promising her to several men, or because of a wrong marriage of the mokul or gawel, with the true gurrong of mokul demanding the daughter and the true waku of gawel claiming her. If the marriage had been according to

1: Warner E-5 (1926-1929) 1937
OI 17 Murngin OI 17

Mutual fidelity is demanded by husband and wife. She is supposed to stay away from all other men, and according to tribal law he is not allowed to cohabit with any women except his wives. Nevertheless, adultery is very common. A woman, if she has not been married before, is supposed to come to her husband sexually untouched. The idea back of this is that she has always been his wife and could therefore not have had physical relations with another man. Frequently women have had intercourse with other dué before starting to live openly with their own husbands. This causes much indignation and usually results in a beating for the girl and a heated quarrel between the husband and the lover, who usually allows the outraged husband to use more vituperation, since the lover and the tribe recognize that he is in the wrong, and it pleases the husband to believe that he has had the better of the argument.

The attitude of the male part of the tribe toward the infidelity of a galle may be seen in the following story believed by the natives. It concerns the father of Danitcha, Danitcha's father's young galle, and her lover. Danitcha is an old man who is still living and belongs to the people along the Murngin borders. It happened when Danitcha was still a fish (unborn), he says, and when his father was a young man. We shall let Danitcha tell the tale.

Back in the bush my father came; he called to his young galle mielk, "Come on, we'll go look for wild honey." The woman went with him. Before this she had had no sexual relations with him. He saw the tracks of a bandicoot going inside a large hollow log. He crawled up to the tree. He said, "Come on, you come on up and look, too. I think we'll catch a bandicoot." She came up. He said, "You squat down with your hands on your knees ready to catch him if he comes out."

The man was lying down pretending to look into the hollow tree's hole, but he was casting his eye up at the girl's vagina. "Oh," he thought, "someone has opened her before, and she's my galle, and I haven't." He knew this because the opening was large. He got up. "I couldn't find anything in there," he said, "I think we'd better go." "Let's go drink some good water," he said. "Where?" "This way at a rock pool that I know about." They went to the rock. It rose straight into the air and was high like the clouds. The rock had a forked stick ladder. It was very long. He climbed up the pole. In the center of the rock was a deep hole that ran through it far down into the earth. It had water in it far below, and it stank with the dead bodies of women who had been untrue to their husbands. He pretended to drink, then came down. "Has it good water?" she asked. "Yes, it's full up. You go up and have a drink. I'll wait for

1: Warner E-5 (1926-1929)1937
OI 17 Murngin OI 17

831 The woman's attitude will be illustrated under the head of runaway unions.

If a man had a sweetheart in his early youth and the affair terminated after he had acquired his proper mates, he must always feed her if she comes to his camp, and she must always feed him if he goes to hers. Wives, however, always complain and cause trouble for the man who tries to follow this custom because of their jealous fear that he may return to the affair. They are anything but hospitable to a husband's former sweetheart who visits their camps. An understanding husband will allow hospitality, particularly if he and his wife's former lover are good friends and if there has been no early trouble between the two. Otherwise, the husband, too, would forbid a wife to feed her former paramour.

836 584 583 Lovers' unions often develop into permanent ones. If there is a dispute about a girl between two young men, one of whom has been living with her, it is likely that, all else being equal, the lover would get the girl, for, say the old men, "They were sweethearts." If the woman should be given to the other man, the lovers frequently run away, and the tribe later recognizes the union.

837 A number of customs are connected with sweethearting. At night the husbands generally make their wives sit in their own camps. A favorite time for the assignation of lovers, therefore, is during the day when the women are accessible out in the bush and mangrove jungle, where they gather bulbs and shellfish—in groups for companionship and for fear of being stolen. The young man sneaks up near her and taps a stone on the ground. The woman is on the alert and knows what this means. She tells her companions that she is thirsty, or with some other excuse slips away to join her lover.

Sometimes a man has a woman's friend—always a woman—drop a certain type of string in the loved one's basket. If the woman belongs to the Yiritja moiety and the man to the Dua he puts an opossum fur string into it; if he is Yiritja and she Dua, he uses a red parrot feather string. This, of course, occurs only after he feels fairly confident that his advances will have a favorable reception. She replies through her woman friend, and arrangements are made for a time and place.

578 837 The following is an account of the operation of this custom, its failure, the feelings of the relatives involved, and the general camp scene during trouble over adultery. Such camp brawls are not infre-

1: Warner E-5 (1926-1929) 1937
OI 17 Murngin OI 17

For the purposes of the blood feud all children, including boys until the time they have a beard, are classed as women; it is felt wrong to kill very young men, who are usually not allowed to accompany the older men on fighting expeditions.

When a man sees the python totem for the first time he must have a moustache and beard. The young men who have not been initiated into the Djungguan by seeing the python totemic emblem are allowed to sit back of the brush hut where the totem is kept. If they are able to look through the wall, they must keep their heads down so that they cannot see what is inside. They are allowed to call out at the end of each song in the chorus with the older men.

When the time comes for them to paint for the last Djungguan ceremony, these young men who have not seen the totem go off to a little depression in the ground or behind some bushes some distance from the old men's camp and put their decorations on by themselves.

Men obtain their wives at almost any age after they have reached maturity, the first usually when the beard begins, and the others at any time after that through the operation of the levirate or because promised by their mother's brothers. For example, several old men over sixty had several female children promised them as wives. The best time for a boy to marry is when his moustache appears, when he "looks like a proper man," and not until then. His father and mother, as well as father-in-law, exert pressure on him to see that he remains single, and they also observe his behavior to make sure that he does not have contact with a girl before that, although usually their efforts are unsuccessful. "Gawel is on the lookout and no business happens with that girl. He says to the father and mother, 'I'll listen for you people too.'" A young man said to me, "We do not sleep with girls before we are married because we are afraid of the old people. Sometimes a girl who belongs to another man says yes and we do. If it is found out the proper husband raises a row, and maybe her father. Sometimes a boy gets killed this way and sometimes they only cut him until the blood comes" (in a makarata).

The proper time for a girl to marry is when her breasts first start developing.

In the married people's camp the husband and wife "own" the hut because they both participate in the making of it and both live in it. The woman ordinarily keeps it clean and throws away the garbage which collects about the floor. Usually she makes the fire and it is her duty to bring in the wood. It is also her duty to cook the shell

6: Berndt E-5 (1946-1947) 1951
OI17 Murngin OI17

796 835 begins with surreptitious meetings at night in the nearby bush. There may be more men than women attending the ceremony, and it may so happen that one woman will have a number of Kunapipi partners to whom she will go. Her husband realizes that this period is charged with social effervescence, so that her indulgence is viewed as a conventional expression, and as an important element in the atmosphere of general goodwill. Some women, however, prefer to wait until the last night, being emotionally excited, then, to an abnormal degree. Prior to this final stage, there is general exchange [832] of obscenities and erotic allusions between men and women, and between the proposed Kunapipi partners.

796 535 786 [301] Two or three nights before the finale the men return to the sacred ground, and sitting around the fires begin to sing parts of the Kunapipi cycle relating to ceremonial copulation. The women come into the ground, some decorated with feathered string headbands. All women may attend, but only those decorated and ochred are "to dance for coitus". Their special form of dancing is called *ngamamali*; they dance before the singing men. They dance the bandicoot dance, hitting their legs together to make a rhythmic sound that blends with the song and the beating sticks.

Then the head Kunapipi woman, a tribal sister or father's sister of the male leader, dances forward, leading the other women[12] back towards the main camp. As they dance along they call out, in just the same way as the men in the *djunggawon* do when they enter the main camp. And like those men, the women too symbolize Julunggul moving towards the Wuwalak. Instead of calling it Julunggul or *gundarn* as the men do, the women call it Kitjin. "But it is the same Dreaming Snake, even though it is called by a different name: for the women call it Kitjin so that we (the men) won't know the real meaning." They turn away again from the main camp and return to the sacred ground, calling out their sacred term, Kitjin! Kitjin! and warning the men: "Don't call this name, or watch us;[13] don't come [778] close and see us, or your bellies will come up like pregnant women". And the men sit down quietly, with heads bent, for they may not look directly at the dancing women: the women are *mareiin* (sacred), just like the dancers in a totemic ceremony.

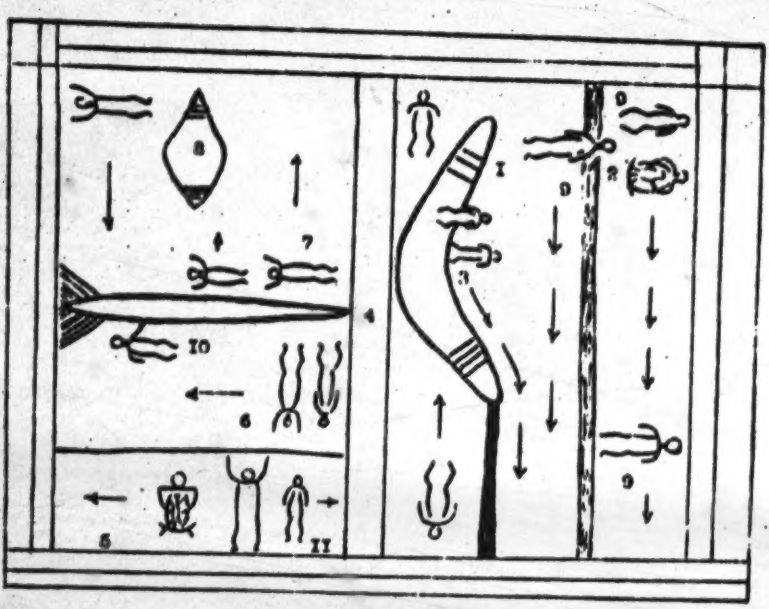
12. It is said that all these women are "big women", and none are young girls. No young boys are present, for the initiates are at one end of the ground "asleep", or covered up with paperbark or blankets; children are left in charge of the old women or young girls who have remained in the main camp.

This really means that the women attending the Kunapipi are married; the young girls are those who are unmarried, betrothed, or who have not yet [881] reached puberty. We are not discussing in this context ritual defloration of young girls, as an adjunct of the Kunapipi, just prior to or on their attaining [934] puberty.

13. That is, the men cannot look straight at the dancing women, "we are frightened of the power they have". Actually, however, they do see them dancing forward.

6: Berndt E-5 (1946-1947) 1951
OI17 Murngin OI17

ground, is principally concerned with ceremonial intercourse, an integral part of the Kunapipi, taking place on the sacred ground. 532 796 881



Text Figure 5.

Key Sketch to illustrate Plate XVII.
Ceremonial intercourse on the sacred ground.

On the right hand side of this drawing is the *jilparindji* or *kalawal* boomerang (1); it occupies the place of the *kanala* in the drawing and is drawn in much the same way. (This particular aspect requires further attention, but cannot be elaborated here.) It is this boomerang (usually designed a little differently, with a groove at the centre) which is used in ritual defloration on the Kunapipi ground, before ceremonial coitus. That is to say, young girls have their hymens pierced prior to intercourse on the ceremonial ground; others, whose hymens have already been broken through normal premarital coitus, have the end of the boomerang placed symbolically in the vagina. In the Rose River region, this form of defloration is a counterpart of the subincision rite, and neither takes place in the north-eastern part of Arnhem Land. In the long *jiritja* Rose River Love Song cycle, known at Yirrkalla, defloration and ritual copula- 532 796 881 833 [304] [836] [171]

10: Warner E-5 (1926-1929) 1958
OI17 Murngin OI17

some. I thought to myself, "I'll talk a little Macassar to them, and I'll run away from these white men and go back home." I felt very sorry I had left it. I was afraid maybe that these white men would take me some place and kill me. Then I thought, "No, they won't." I was afraid. I don't know why now. 159

I hunted for some people, but I didn't find any. I came back from the bush singing a mourning song (pages 413-415). It said how sorry I was and how unhappy, and it is the song we sing when people are dead or when they have gone away and we want them to come back. I got on the boat and went on with these people, for I could not stay by myself. We went on past Cape Don, but there was no lighthouse there then. We went to Port Darwin, where I found many tribes. They had not all died. They were most of them alive then. [533]

We stayed there a little while and came back to the country of Cape Don Tommy. I was still very young and I had no beard and no pubic hair when we arrived there. I stayed there two rains. When I left I had both pubic hair and a beard. When I came there I did not know their language. When I went away I spoke it. One night one of their women made a large bark hut and fixed a fire in front of it and put paper bark on the ground to lie on. She told me I could go inside. I went inside, thinking there would be another boy with me.

When I went into that hut that woman crawled on top of me and put her legs around mine so I couldn't move. I was still young. I did not know what she wanted. I thought she was holding my legs that way and someone would come up and spear me. I could not talk her language and she did not understand Macassar. The girl was young and had young breasts on her like this [he cupped his hands over his nipples]. I wriggled loose from her and ran outside. I found Cape Don Tommy, I said to him, "What does that woman want?"

That girl was his half-daughter. He said, "I think she wants you for a sweetheart."

I said, "I don't like that. In my country we don't make sweethearts that way. We don't make sweethearts before everyone in the middle of the camp. Boys and girls sneak away from the camp and do it there so that the old people can't see us and we won't be ashamed." [836]

He said, "Don't be afraid of her husband. He won't fight you. That is a custom here. He is away now. When he comes back you give him presents, and he will know that you belong to another country, and that our people took you from there, and we must see that you have a sweetheart just as we must see that you have plenty of food."

I slept, though, with the other boys that night. Next morning I was sit-

10: Warner E-5 (1926-1929) 1958
OI17 Murngin OI17

159 you. You're not a man." This makes her quiet. I think sometimes if I did
593 have a sweetheart I wouldn't tell her, because none of the other men do
[837] when they have them.

159 When I was a young man, women were more careful and better than
837 they are now. My brother, Badunga, is just starting to grow a mustache. This no-good woman we call the Mokoi [evil ghost] has already tried to seduce him. My brother was out hunting the other day with some other boys, and when he was a little bit away from them that Mokoi woman saw him. She was getting shells, away from the rest of the women. She is no longer a young woman. She has no children because she has copulated with too many men who were not her husbands. She sneaked up on him and talked very nice to him, but my brother Badunga did nothing and came away. He was afraid, and besides he did not like the woman.

159 Badunga told me. I went down to her husband's camp and told him.
684 I called that Mokoi out and gave her a very hard beating. Her husband, who is my "half-father," did nothing. When I had finished he took a spear-thrower and started beating her too. All the people in the camp said that was very good and was what she needed.

159 Women before were different. They sat down more quiet than they do
837 now. This one, who is now Dimala's wife, who used to be my sweetheart when I was a young boy, seduced one of the Ritarngo boys. He is too young. I said, "I don't know what is the matter with you women now. You are going after younger and younger boys all the time for sweethearts. I shall have to watch Marl-ma-leen and Pulli [his 18-months-old son and three-year-old boy], or you will have them out too. You are ruining our young men because you are teaching them to have too many women who don't belong to them. They won't sit quiet with their own wives when they have them because you women teach them another way. When we old men [836] were young, a man had one sweetheart and no more until he was married and had proper wives of his own."

159 If the sweetheart I had a long time ago would come to me now and
572 ask for food I must give it to her. I would not have sexual relations with
837 her now, because I am a married man and that would be wrong. When I go to her camp she gives me food. Her husband is a good man; he says to that woman, "Give Mahkarolla some food. He used to be your sweetheart." If he were no good and jealous, he would growl at the woman and tell her not to give me anything to eat. I haven't any sweethearts now. Dimala's wife used to be my sweetheart a long time ago. She likes me very much now. Sometimes she comes around and wants me to go out to the bush with her but I say, "No, I've got a wife. I have children." I will not "play" with another woman. I would get a baby (pages 74-92).